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Cease-Fire Developments

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State Dept. review completed

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Cease-Fire Developments

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SOUTH VIETNAMThe Military Situation

In a recent assessment of near-term Communist military intentions, the CIA station in Saigon concludes that the emphasis will remain on the "political struggle" and that an offensive is not imminent. The appraisal anticipates that there will be heavier fighting in selected areas during the next few months, but that it will fall far short of a nationwide, major-unit campaign. At least some of the reports suggesting that a major outbreak in hostilities was imminent probably stem from Communist attempts to keep local cadre morale high and combat units in some degree of readiness. The Communists still have the option of an all-out offensive, but the field appraisal concludes that as yet there are no reliable indications that they intend to pick up this option in the near future.

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LAOS

Negotiations

Communist negotiator Phoumi Vongvichit is expected to arrive in Vientiane on 26 April. Pathet Lao representatives there are saying that they expect a new government by early June. [redacted]

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CAMBODIAThe Military Situation

Khmer Communist forces on 25 April gained temporary control over a section of the Mekong River's east bank opposite Phnom Penh when they overran a small government outpost. At last report, two other positions in the area were also under attack. Unless they are dislodged, the Communists could shell downtown Phnom Penh with medium-range weapons from this location. The Communists are continuing to harass government positions along the Mekong near Neak Luong, and still control an eight-mile section of Route 1 north of that town.

South of Phnom Penh, the government forces that recently reoccupied Siem Reap along Route 2 abruptly abandoned the village on 25 April. They returned--without orders--to their base camps near the capital. Communist pressure on Takeo has eased as a result of intense US air strikes. Some Communist harassing attacks against government positions east of Kampot are still being reported. President Lon Nol made a brief inspection trip to Kampot City on 25 April.

In the northwest, a government operation to reopen a section of Route 5 began on 25 April after a three-week delay. Two battalions from Kompong Chhnang started south along the highway, but were halted by the Communists after advancing about 12 miles.

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